

# PSOMS Member Alert: COVID-19 Update

## 3/25/2020

The Pennsylvania Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons is working hard to keep its membership apprised of the constantly changing landscape of the healthcare policies involved with the COVID-19 pandemic that affect the general population and the oral and maxillofacial surgery community in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to act as your advocate at the local, state and national level. As most of you have seen by now, the AAOMS has published recommendations on its web site to help prevent the spread of the virus and to protect its membership and their patients from contracting the virus (<https://www.aaoms.org/news/covid-19-updates#14>). These recommendations are in line with other health care organizations and are prudent methods that should be followed in maintaining the safety of ourselves, staff, and patients. I have sent another letter to both the Governor and Secretary of Health advising them of this information and detailing the position of the PSOMS.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) unilaterally implemented very strict mandates on the dental community in Pennsylvania, even for management of dental emergencies, without consultation with national or state dental leadership. Regardless, the PADOH holds the jurisdiction of mandating guidelines concerning the public health of the Commonwealth and its current guidelines for dental community are enforceable. Failure to adhere to these mandates would be considered a serious violation and could include permanent revocation of dental or medical licensure. As of the 3 pm Press Conference today with Governor Wolfe and Dr. Levine, there have been no changes to the current guidelines. While the PADOH is now working with local and state dental organization leadership to amend the guidelines, when and if these guidelines are changed, they still are currently in effect and must be observed. The Board of the PSOMS advises you to take these requirements seriously in order to mitigate the spread of this virus and eliminate the risk to your professional license. PSOMS also recommends keeping abreast of and following CDC, PADOH and AAOMS guidelines.

The PSOMS Board is working with the PADOH to reconsider some of the stricter guidelines, such as the negative pressure ventilation treatment room requirement, which, as far as we know, is not required in any other state in the country for dental treatment during this outbreak. It is the position of the board that, because there are few negative pressure treatment rooms currently available within the Commonwealth for oral surgical emergency treatment, both these rooms and local hospital emergency departments face the prospect of being overwhelmed with otherwise easily managed dental emergencies that will quickly deplete available PPE supplies and divert man-hours, equipment, and beds that are required to manage this viral pandemic.

Additionally, PSOMS recommends that you pre-screen every patient with the previously detailed questions and record the temperature every patient and any escort as they enter your facility. Obtain written informed consent from your patients that they may have an increased risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission as a result of any treatment. We also recommend that whatever negative ventilatory system you may endeavor to use in your practice that there be some way to confirm, monitor, and document that the equipment is operating properly.

There certainly will be more to come in the future concerning this.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Cillo Jr., DMD, MPH, PhD, FACS  
President, Pennsylvania Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons